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Knitters' blanket charity finish...

EVEN though Basingstoke Festival has finished for 2013 it is continuing to benefit the community with 31 blankets from the Basingstoke Yarn Storm being donated to the RSPCA shop at the Top of the Town.

Upcycled by local group Audleys from the squares of yarn that covered Market Square during the Festival, the blankets will now be sold to raise money for the animal charity with the remainder used to keep rescue animals warm this winter.

Cabinet Member for Partnerships Cllr Cathy Osselton joined Basingstoke Yarn Storm organiser Elly Drew and Meg Gadd from the RSPCA for the handover recently.

Cllr Osselton said: "This year's Basingstoke Festival might be over but I am so pleased it is still benefiting the community."

"The Yarn Storm was a wonderful

addition to the Top of the Town and it is fitting that the blankets are being donated to a shop so close to where it took place. I look forward to seeing other innovative ideas residents come up with as part of the festival in the future."

Yarn Storm organiser Elly Drew said "Thank you very much to everyone who took part in this year's Yarn Storm, it's been great fun and wonderful to help such a worthwhile cause".

Join Yarn Storm by visiting www.woolexchange.co.uk.

Audleys Resource Service provides adults with various physical disabilities support to access community resources, such as sports, social venues, retail outlets and places of historical and general interest. As well as providing group activities including art, cooking and IT.

Pilot scheme to help victims of anti-social behaviour IT'S A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE

ONE of Hampshire's leading housing associations has launched a pilot scheme with Victim Support to give greater assistance to victims of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in two areas of Basingstoke.

Under Sovereign Housing Association's initiative, people affected by ASB in Buckskin and South Ham have the option to be referred to Victim Support, who will be able to offer them a dedicated service.

By **Chris Patching**

c.patching@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

Two residents are already making use of the service, which was launched at the start of August.

Victim Support is the independent national charity that helps people find their strength again after crime and anti-social behaviour. It offers help to over 1.5 million

people affected by crime each year across England and Wales.

"As part of our aim of creating great communities, we have a strong commitment to tackling ASB," said Jim Benson, Sovereign's Anti-Social Behaviour Officer for Basingstoke. "This arrangement will provide residents affected by ASB with a whole support mechanism that is free, impartial and confidential."

"Because of Victim Support's

professional expertise and capacity, this partnership allows us to provide a specialist service to the victims of ASB, in addition to the support Sovereign staff offer."

Specially trained caseworkers will be able to give personalised support, help victims of ASB understand the process, refer them to the right agencies, provide advocacy on their behalf and check that appropriate action is being taken.

The pilot scheme is part of a wider investment in Buckskin and South Ham by Sovereign, which has over 2,000 properties in these areas.

Selina Robinson, of Victim Support, said: "The Victim Support ASB Project team are really excited to be a part of this new venture and to provide support for tenants of Sovereign who have been affected by ASB. We are looking forward to working in part-

nership with Sovereign and their residents to improve community support and development."

Victim Support will be exploring how to make the scheme sustainable, for example by promoting the concept of a peer group, where people suffering similar problems can come together and provide each other with support.

• Sovereign Housing Association is one of the largest housing associations in the South.

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Green Flag award for our best parks

EASTROP Park and the War Memorial Park have both again been named in the list of best parks in England and Wales.

For the fourteenth year running Eastrop Park, run by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, has been awarded the Green Flag. The War Memorial Park has also won the award for the sixth year in a row, meaning Basingstoke has two of the top parks in the country for visitors to enjoy.

By Chris Patching

c.patching@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

The Green Flag Award, which has recognised a record 1,448 parks and green spaces this year, is managed by a consortium which includes Keep Britain Tidy, the National Housing Federation and the Federation of City Farms and Community.

Cabinet Member for the Environment Cllr Robert Donnell joined members from Basingstoke Park Run and Basingstoke Health Walkers; organisers of the Basingstoke Festival of Transport and World Party (Basingstoke Multicultural Forum)

and a number of operatives who manage the parks on a day to day basis at the Green Flag launch in the War Memorial Park.

Eastrop Park boasts everything from a wildlife area to a children's paddling pool, boating lake, play areas, trim trail and tree trail, whilst the War Memorial Park offers visitors attractive historic parkland as well as a play area, BMX/skate park, sports pitches and all weather tennis courts. It also includes a woodland walk, wedding garden, community fruit tree orchard and an aviary.

Both parks recently hosted events as part of the Basingstoke Festival, including World Party in Eastrop Park and the

borough's hugely popular free music event Basingstoke Live in the War Memorial Park.

Cabinet Member for the Environment Cllr Robert Donnell said: "I am delighted that two of our much loved parks have retained their high standards and again received the Green Flag award."

"I'd like to thank all the staff and volunteers who show such dedication and enthusiasm in maintaining the borough's parks. Achieving these awards reflects just how well our parks are used along with the very high standard we keep them."

For more information about the Green Flag Award visit www.greenflagaward.org.uk.

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Danielle develops bee-friendly garden



David Wilson Homes' Danielle Merrick in one of the developers' bee friendly gardens

HAMPSHIRE'S bee population is set for a boost with news that leading housebuilder David Wilson Homes will be playing its part in supporting the insects by creating bee-friendly gardens.

The five star housebuilder has become a corporate member of the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) which represents 24,000 amateur beekeepers and the honey bees they care for when pollination activity is at its peak.

The pledge to support the bee

population in Hampshire comes at a crucial time for the survival of honeybees. The BBKA reports that a third of all honey bee colonies were lost over last winter and the late arrival of spring is expected to have caused numbers to fall still further.

The partnership will see bee-friendly plants featured in all show-home gardens and public areas and local beekeepers are being invited to developments to help more people learn about how they can create their own bee-friendly gardens.

There are also plans for its homebuyers to be given bee-friendly seeds and advice to create their own bee-friendly gardens and projects with local schools and organisations.

David Wilson Homes sales director Michelle Storer said she was delighted to be able to support the BBKA. "We have a number of developments in the region and by pledging our support to creating the best possible environment for bees, we hope to play a small part in the survival of these insects."

Anti-nuclear campaigners' AWE arrests

ANTI-NUCLEAR activists were this week continuing their protest outside the AWE premises in Burghfield.

As The Observer went to Press, police had made 20 arrests.

Campaigners are voicing their objections to plans to replace Britain's Trident nuclear missiles system, assembled, maintained and eventually decommissioned by AWE.

Police say security has not been compromised and campaigners are due to leave the site at the weekend.

Debut for international landscape artist Sarah

INSPIRATIONAL landscape artist Sarah Pye is making her debut next week at one of Hampshire's best loved galleries. Running from September 9-15, the exhibition entitled 'Forgotten Seasons' will be held at The Frame Gallery in Odiham.

To celebrate Sarah's debut solo exhibition, The Frame Gallery has teamed up with popular Odiham bistro, next-door, to offer visitors to the Private View on Friday, September 13, a free glass of wine or prosecco with every main meal purchased on the evening.

'Forgotten Seasons' is inspired by the natural beauty of the countryside, with a focus on woodland scenes throughout the seasons; distant views, richly coloured autumn leaves and fields of wild flowers, bluebells and heather.

Sarah Pye's warm and vivid landscapes evoke feelings of peace, space and freedom, inviting you to step into the painting and explore a little further.

Jan Baker, gallery owner, says: "Sarah Pye is an incredible artist and we're looking forward to hosting her first solo exhibition for The Frame Gallery. We hope our celebratory offer will entice some new faces to Odiham High Street who'll enjoy meeting the artist at the Private View, followed by a delicious meal and complimentary glass of wine at nextdoor."

For more information visit www.theframe-gallery.co.uk or contact on 01256 701082 email: theframe@btinternet.com

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Sports Trust secures £50k lottery boost



By Chris Patching

c.patching@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

BASINGSTOKE Sports Trust, which manages Basingstoke Sports Centre, has secured £50,000 of National Lottery funding from Sport England.

Sport England has revealed that more than 1300 local sports projects across the country have now received National Lottery funding through its Inspired Facilities programme, part of the Olympic and Paralympic legacy.

Basingstoke Sports Trust will receive £50,000 of funding to go towards a project to refurbish changing rooms at the centre.

James Starbuck, Chief Executive for the Trust, said: "This is fantastic news for the Trust and our customers. As a charity, we rely almost entirely upon the fees our customers pay to support the facility and continue to develop it."

"This award means we are able to refurbish our male changing rooms and bring them up to the same quality as the rest of the building."

"Our customers rightly expect



Delighted staff at Basingstoke Sports Centre celebrate the £50,000 lottery windfall

high standards from us and the Trust will be investing £50,000 of its own funds as well to ensure the new changing rooms deliver just that."

Maria Miller, MP for Basingstoke and Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, said: "It is fantastic news that Basingstoke Sports Trust will be part of the Olympic legacy with Sport England's Inspired Facilities programme."

"The new funding will enable the Sports Centre to further improve their facilities, and help them to attract more people in Basingstoke into taking up sport and physical activity."

Sport England's Chair, Nick Bitel, commented "a year on from the Olympics, this National Lottery investment is helping us to deliver a lasting sporting legacy in Basingstoke."

The £100,000 project is due to start later this year and be completed before the New Year. It is anticipated that the new changing rooms will attract new customers into taking part in sport and physical activity as well as providing better facilities for existing customers.

For more details about Basingstoke Sports Centre, please contact the Reception Team on 01256 326 331.

Shhh.. Noise reduction plans for M3

THE Highways Agency has announced that further sections of the M3 motorway between junctions 6 and 5 will be resurfaced with noise reducing material.

This work will be carried out mainly between late August and late September.

Basingstoke MP Maria Miller said: "Working with local residents I have campaigned for the resurfacing of the M3."

"This important maintenance will improve the road surface making it safer for drivers and quieter for local residents. I will continue to press for further resurfacing of other stretches of the M3 in the Basingstoke area."

The Highways Agency is resurfacing deteriorated sections of a 3.7km stretch of the southbound carriageway of the M3 and parts of the northbound carriageway in the Hatch area. There are also plans to resurface the slip roads and roundabout at junction 6 at Basingstoke.

Conman dupes pensioner out of jewellery

POLICE are hunting a conman who duped a pensioner into letting him into his home, before stealing jewellery and cash.

Now detectives are appealing for information and witnesses after the incident in Knight Street, Basingstoke, on August 22 between 8-9pm.

The 65-year-old allowed the conman into his home and once

inside the man stole an 18ct gold ring and persuaded the victim to give him money.

The man is described as white, of a slim build, bald and about 5ft 10ins tall or taller.

Detective Constable Andy Panter said: "This ring has huge sentimental value to the victim as it belonged to his late grandmother."

"Did you see anything suspicious in the area? Any information, no matter how insignificant, could be helpful in this investigation."

Anyone with any information is asked to contact Det Con Panter at Basingstoke CID on 101 or call the charity Crimestoppers line on 0800 555 111 anonymously.

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Free fitness course for new mums and babies

A FREE fitness course tailored for new mums and their babies has proven such a success that Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council is offering a further two six-week courses this autumn.

First trialled in spring this year, the free Buggyfit courses were fully subscribed and positive feedback from participants showed that they were invaluable in getting new mothers back into circulation, meeting other mums and getting fit.

Comments included:

"I was able to get fit and get out and about with the baby."

"It was an excellent course and I enjoyed the variety within it."

The new courses are being held at Down Grange (starting September 9) and Basing Wood (starting September 11). Both courses start at 11am and last for an hour.

The exercises are led by Emma Perkins, a qualified pre and postnatal personal trainer, and Buggyfit aims to burn fat, improve posture and strengthen core muscles whatever your level of fitness. Buggies (and babies) are an essential part of the exercises, but there is no need to have an expensive or sports buggy

to take part. Cabinet Member for Partnerships Cllr Cathy Osselton said: "I'm delighted that the council is able to offer more Buggyfit courses because they are a fantastic way to reach out to new mums who may otherwise find it hard to get active again with a baby in tow. I've tried a class myself and highly recommend it."

Places are limited and will be allocated on a first-come, first served basis. For more information contact Claire Leaney at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council on 01256 844 844.

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Children's charity is calling for your help

LOCAL children's charity Sebastian's Action Trust is calling for help from local businesses and organisations to assist the completion of an ambitious gardening project at their North Waltham respite house The Bluebells.

Beginning in September, the Trust is aiming to complete the development of a Garden of Reflection in time to host its Annual Service of Remembrance at The Bluebells for the first time. In order to achieve this aim, manpower and funding for materials are desperately needed.

Jane Gates, Trust director and mother of Sebastian whose vision the Trust is built upon, said: "At Sebastian's Action Trust we understand the utter devastation that comes with the loss of a child or young person and that is why we offer an annual service of remembrance and thanksgiving.



By Chris Patching

c.patching@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

It gives those affected an opportunity to meet other bereaved parents and siblings in the knowledge that only those who have experienced such tragedy can truly understand the depths of such loss.

"Since The Bluebells opened in July 2011 we have supported over 200 families from all over the UK but sadly 21 children have died in this period. Our commitment to their families remains a central focus for the Trust and we are constantly striving to find additional ways in which we can help and support them in their loss.

"Many of our bereaved families choose to come back to The Bluebells after their child's death and we want to support them in this through the development of a garden for quiet contemplation and reflection, allowing for non-denominational remembrance days that enable bereaved families to meet others who also live with the loss of a child.

"We have been so lucky to receive the support of local businesses and organisations in the past with projects at The Bluebells." The garden project will hopefully commence on 11th September.

Maria is highlighting business confidence

BASINGSTOKE MP Maria Miller joined the Mayor Cllr Dan Putty, Sir George Young MP and a host of senior representatives of local businesses and other organisations at an event organised by Destination Basingstoke, to celebrate Basingstoke as a great place

to live and work.

The event was held at Airkix, the new indoor skydiving centre at Basingstoke Leisure Park.

Maria welcomed the guests and spoke about the vote of confidence in Basingstoke that recent major investments in the town have demonstrated.

She highlighted TIAA-CREFF Asset Management's purchase of Festival Place, Sainsbury's £100million new distribution centre, Network Rail's £50million signalling centre, Celador's purchase of the local radio station, and the new Airkix facility itself.

Commenting on why businesses chose to locate and remain in Basingstoke, Maria said that location and transport connections were important, but so too were the highly skilled local workforce and the infrastructure - with investment in place to improve access to high speed broadband and other improvement in the pipeline. She also highlighted that Basingstoke was one of the top 10 employment centres in the south east, and unemployment locally was now at its lowest for some four and a half years.

Maria said: "I was pleased to meet up with many of Destination Basingstoke's 'Ambassadors', to celebrate the town's success stories - and look forward to an exciting future. It was good to hear from some of the new investors in the town what had attracted them to Basingstoke and hear their different perspectives."



News Bites

Burglary plea

POLICE are appealing for witnesses and information following a burglary in Basingstoke.

A black Xbox 360 slim 250GB console, a white Xbox wireless controller, a black Xbox Kinect sensor, Xbox games and a Dell laptop were stolen from a premises in New Road on August 12-13.

A cash-fed electricity meter was also broken into and around £200 cash was stolen from it.

PC Mark Pullman said: "Did you see this burglary? Have you been offered these items for sale? If so, please get in touch."

Anyone with any information should contact PC Pullman at Basingstoke police station on 101 or call the Crimestoppers charity anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Attempted theft

A MAN attempted to steal another man's mobile phone while he was waiting at a bus stop on Kingsclere Road near the Houndsmills roundabout around 5.45pm on August 20. Anyone with any information is asked to contact PC Lane at Basingstoke police station on 101 or the Crimestoppers charity anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Home raided

POLICE are appealing for witnesses and information following a burglary in Oakley on August 1 when the patio doors at a house in Greenways were forced and an Apple iPad was stolen.

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Kenyan elite come to town

THREE elite Kenyan runners will be taking part in the Basingstoke Half Marathon - all hoping to break the new record set by one of their compatriots last year.

The Kenyans, who will run as 'Team Run Fast', are made up of two men and one woman. One of the men, Jonah Chesum, competed in the finals of the 800m and 1500m at the Paralympics in London last year.

All three athletes are looking forward to the challenge of the Basingstoke half marathon:

Nicholas Kirui:

Nicholas won the Bucharest International Half Marathon in 2013, his personal best for a half marathon

By Chris Patching

c.patching@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

is 1.04.07 - 2 seconds faster than Andrew Lesuda's record breaking run last year in Basingstoke.

"I am looking forward to coming to Basingstoke and my aim is to break the course record set last year by my training partner in Kenya, Andrew Lesuda. I've been told by Andrew it is an interesting course and I look forward to the challenge", said Nicholas.

Jonah Chesum:

Jonah is a Kenyan Paralympian and competed in London last year and is converting from track to road racing - he expects to give his able bodied compatriots as well UK based athletes some serious competition.

"Basingstoke is giving me the perfect opportunity to show that I can compete against other Kenyan athletes outside of the Paralympic competition.

"My aim is to win the race and show how quickly Paralympic athletes can run on the roads", said Jonah

Perendis Lekapana:

Perendis has a personal best of 1.15.53 - 4 minutes quicker than last year's female winner of the Basingstoke Half Marathon.

"I came to the UK earlier in the year to race over 5 miles and 10km. I won both of those races and I hope that in Basingstoke I will do the same for the half marathon distance.

"I look forward to meeting everyone in Basingstoke and all of the supporters of the race out on the



course", said Perendis.

"We are delighted that our race is attracting such international interest and feel especially honoured to be welcoming a Paralympian, it looks like it will be quite a battle at the front of the field. The race is filling up fast so anyone not entered already should do so very soon" said Felicity Edwards, race director from organisers Destination Basingstoke.

This year's race is set to be even better with new sponsors, David Wilson Homes, Lucozade, Newbury Building Society, Fir Tree Clinic, Basingstoke Sports Centre and Festival Place all getting involved to add to the race experience, joining the main headline sponsors Shire and t shirt sponsors, Phillips Solicitors for their third year of support.

The Destination Basingstoke Shire Half marathon will take place on Sunday 6th October.

You can enter on line at www.basingstokehalfmarathon.com



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Plea for witnesses after burglary

POLICE are appealing for witnesses following a burglary in Overton.

Offenders entered a house on Church Road via an insecure window between 7.30am and 4.30pm on Friday, August 9. Nothing was stolen from the address.

PC Mark Pullman from Basingstoke police station said: "Did you see anyone suspicious in the area

during the day? If you live in the area, did you have any cold callers on August 9?"

Anyone with information about the incident is asked to contact PC Pullman at Basingstoke police station by phoning 101. Mini-Com users can call the police on 18001 101. Information can be given anonymously by calling the Crimestoppers charity on 0800 555 111.

Who do you think you are?

CELEBRITIES have been finding out during the recent TV series and now Hampshire residents have the chance to receive help from Hampshire County Council in tracing their family trees.

From September to December the Council's Hampshire Archives and Local Studies Service is running evening and daytime workshops at Hampshire Record Office in Winchester, on how to start genealogical research and get the best from the available sources.

The workshops are designed for absolute beginners and those researchers who have made a start, perhaps using internet resources, but now want to add depth to their research by exploring original material. Councillor Keith Chapman, Hampshire County Council's Executive Member for Culture and Recreation, said: "Researching family history is fascinating and can lead to some amazing discoveries. It is not as hard as some people may think and these workshops are an excellent opportunity for people who have

always wanted to give it a go, as our staff will be on hand to guide people through the extensive resources on offer from our Hampshire Record Office."

The workshops will be held on:
Tuesdays: September 24, October 22, November 26, from 6-8pm
Thursdays: 5 September, 10 October, 7 November, 5 December, 2-4pm

The evening sessions will begin with a talk on Hampshire Archives and Local Studies and the most useful sources the service offers for family historians including parish registers, censuses and wills. It will be followed by a tour of the reception and archive search room demonstrating the layout and how the system works. There will also be a chance to make a start with your family tree using sources available in the search room with staff on hand to answer any questions. For more information about what's on at Hampshire Record Office visit: <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/archives/whatson-hro.htm>

Drivers and bikers urged to 'look out'

CAR drivers and bikers are being urged to look after each other and drive safely by Hampshire County Council.

Councillor Sean Woodward, Executive Member for Economy, Environment and Transport at Hampshire County Council said: "Sadly there have been ten motorcycle deaths on the County's roads this year. We want to help prevent further accidents by increasing safety awareness amongst riders and drivers.

"Many riders are injured at junctions when vehicles pull out, others crash as a result of entering a bend too fast. Our message to drivers is 'think bike' and always take longer to look for motorcyclists especially at junctions and when overtaking, give a second glance to check it's really safe to manoeuvre as they could be hidden in your blind spot.

"Riders can help too by wearing high visibility clothing, riding defensively; concentrating and anticipating the errors of other road users. I would encourage bikers to go on the BikeSafe course run by Hampshire Constabulary in partnership with Hampshire Fire and Rescue. Visit: <http://think.direct.gov.uk/motorcycle-partners.html>

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Readers' letters

To submit a letter or comment

The Letters Editor, Newspaper House, 4A Hawksworth,
Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 7HR
news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk
basingstokeobserver.co.uk

Cut animal testing

Dear Editor,

The latest government statistics show that over 4 million animals were used in experiments in the UK during 2012 – equivalent to over 11,000 experiments every day. This is a rise of 9 per cent and is the highest number of animal experiments seen for 26 years and flies in the face of the Coalition Government's pledge in 2010 to reduce the number of animals used in research which has risen each year since.

It is unacceptable that millions of animals continue to suffer and die in UK laboratories, including 3,214 dogs, 202 cats, 2,186 monkeys, 10,538 rabbits, 191 horses, 500,056 fish and 152,359 birds.

There has been an explosive increase in the use of non-human primates (up by 22 per cent) and the genetic modification of animals (up by 22 per cent). Genetic research imposes a heavy welfare burden as many animals who do not show 'required' characteristics are killed even before any research can take place, while others die of severe and unrelated malformations caused by the genetic modification techniques themselves.

The UK should be leading the way in reducing animal testing, yet we remain one of the world's largest users of animals in experiments. For more information on the BUAV and our work, please visit: www.buav.org

Michelle Thew, Chief Executive, BUAV, 16a Crane Grove, London, N7 8NN.

Down Grange should remain an open space

Dear Sirs,

At the Full Council cabinet meeting on 25 July 2013 the draft Local Plan was approved for a six week period of public consultation which is scheduled to start 23rd August 2013 to 4th October 2013 (6 weeks).

The site at Down Grange, (BAS069), is within Basingstoke's settlement boundary and is therefore in the local plan and SHLAA. The SHLAA is a list of potential sites for development.

Down Grange (BAS069) is a green open space that has been used by many local people over several decades. It continues to be used for recreational purposes on a daily basis and it also becomes an overflow car park when major events take place within the Down Grange sports area.

If Down Grange is developed it won't matter what traffic management schemes because more traffic on local roads is unacceptable and will reduce the quality of life for local residents.

Down Grange is a fantastic resource that Basingstoke deserves, it should be kept as a space for recreation, not developed for housing.

If you agree then let the borough council know during the period of consultation. A

templated letter is available from Down Grange Action Group, see www.downgrangeactiongroup.co.uk which also gives instruction on who to send your letter to.

Kind Regards

Dave Luff

Down Grange Action Group.

Spare some thought for the other animals...

BRITISH chicken farmers are claiming a boost in sales in the wake of the horse meat scandal.

This consumer behaviour highlights the inconsistency of British sentimentality: love for some animals, indifference for others.

Why are chickens undeserving of compassion and concern? They feel pain and get frightened, and suffer horribly in factory farms and at the slaughterhouse.

If you are upset at the thought of eating one type of animal, please spare a thought for the others.

A horse is a chicken is a pig is a fish. For a free guide to going meat-free, email info@animalaid.org.uk or call 01732 364546.

Yours faithfully,

Claudia Tarry, Campaigner, Animal Aid, The Old Chapel, Bradford Street, Tonbridge, TN9 1AW

MP's stamp of approval

MP MARIA Miller has been informed about proposed changes to the Post Office at Chineham, which aim to bring about an improved service for local residents.

The Post Office at Chineham Shopping Centre, is to be completely refurbished and a further Post Office serving point will be provided for use at the retail counter, providing longer opening times, including a Sunday service. In order to carry out the refurbishment, the Post Office will be closed for one week, from September 16.

Maria said: "The Post Office at Chineham provides a much valued service to the local community and it is good news that the Post Office has decided to upgrade the branch, with modernisation of the facilities and longer opening hours."

Maria added: "It has been disappointing to see the closure of several local Post Offices in Basingstoke over the years. Chineham Post Office has always been very busy, and all the more so since the Old Basing Post Office closed in 2008. So I welcome this investment and hope that it will help to reduce waiting times at Chineham."



A Letters column for you, our readers...

Your Basingstoke Observer has launched a Letters column - and it's for you, our readers, to use on any relevant local topics of your choice.

All we ask is that you keep your letters fairly brief, concise and, above all, interesting for all our readers to enjoy. Thank you.

Chris Patching, Group Editor

The Editor reserves the right to cut or amend Readers' Letters where necessary.

You've gotta be in it...

ST MICHAEL'S Hospice has announced the results of lottery draw 278 held on August 30.

First prize of £1000 to 80517 of Basingstoke, second prize of £100 to 17896 of Basingstoke, third prize of £50 to 87750 of Basingstoke, fourth prize of £20 to 70866 of Tadley.

Sixteen prizes of £5 go to 13574, 28863, 33053, 39526, 41434, 45217, 46174, 46457, 47794, 51934, 55297, 61471, 62678, 63201, 67052, 72026.

Do you have a story to share with our readers?

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News Bites

Cars entered

POLICE are appealing for witnesses after two cars were broken into in the Kempshott area overnight on Tuesday, August 20.

Windows were smashed on a Vauxhall Corsa on Falcon Close and a Ford Transit on Starling Close.

A DSLR camera was stolen from one vehicle along with other photography accessories and a wallet was taken from the other.

Anyone with information about the incident is asked to contact PC Lisa Cooper at Basingstoke police station by phoning 101. Mini-Com users can call the police on 18001 101. Information can be given anonymously by calling the Crimestoppers charity on 0800 555 111.

Mower taken

A HAYTER-HARRIER petrol mower and laptop computer were stolen from a large rural detached cottage in Nutley.

Now police are appealing for information and witnesses to a burglary which happened at about 10.45am on August 23. Offenders stole a garden fork from a garage and used it to force open a window at the house.

Once inside they have stolen an older-style Hewlett Packard laptop in a black canvas bag. They also stole a Hayter Harrier rotary petrol mower.

PC Mark Pullman said: "Were you in the area at the time? Did you see anything suspicious?"

Contact PC Pullman at Basingstoke Police Station on 101.

Rivers initiative welcomed by MP

By Chris Patching

c.patching@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

BASINGSTOKE MP Maria Miller has welcomed the recent launch of the Environment Agency's "Challenges and Choices" consultation, which gives people the opportunity to tell them what needs to be protected and improved in local rivers.

Maria said: "We know that the River Loddon is polluted because of excess phosphate levels, and is failing to meet the standards expected under the European Water Framework Directive.

"We also know that water supply is an area of concern. Continuing high levels of house building will further contribute to these problems."

She added: "This consultation by the Environment Agency is a really important opportunity for Basingstoke residents to highlight the problems of water supply and pollution in the River Loddon, and call for action to address these concerns."

"I would urge everyone interested in protecting and improving our local environment to get involved and make their views known."

The Environment Agency's consultation runs for six months and can be accessed online at www.environment-agency.gov.uk/challengesandchoices.

All views will be fed into a

revised River Basin Management Plan - a document setting out plans to improve the water environment across the South East from 2015 to 2021.

Ms Miller has been a long-time campaigner for improvements to help clean up the River Loddon, polluted because of excess phosphate levels, and which fails to meet the Good Ecological Status under the European Water Framework Directive.

The Basingstoke Sewage Treatment Works at Chineham has been a key focus for Maria, but she recently asked the Environment Agency about the two smaller Sewage Treatment Works at Sherfield-on-Loddon and Sherborne St John.

There are no quality consent limits for phosphates at either of these works, and the 2009 Water Cycle Study, commissioned by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, said that the effluent from these two works had a significant impact on phosphate levels in the Loddon.

Maria said: "The Environment Agency has now told me that they are carrying out a full options appraisal for the Loddon



• Basingstoke MP Maria Miller catchment.

"They are considering recommending measures to improve the situation, including setting new phosphate limits for the two sewage treatment works at Sherfield-on-Loddon and Sherborne St John."

"This is great news and, if implemented, could go a long way towards improving the water quality of the Loddon."

"I will be keeping up the pressure to try to make sure that the limits are introduced as soon as possible."

Teaching exercises to end falls

HAMPSHIRE County Council, in partnership with Winchester City Council and DC Leisure are inviting exercise instructors who work with older people to attend a course that will help them teach exercises to prevent falls.

The Otago falls prevention exercise course was produced in Otago, New Zealand and consists of 24 evidence based exercises which improve balance, strength and confidence to reduce the risk of falls and injuries for older people. The two day course will be held at River Park Leisure Centre, Winchester on Thursday 24 October and Wednesday 13 November 2013.

The course is available to level 3 and 4 exercise instructors with a years' experience of working with older people. It works well in sheltered housing schemes where there is often a large space in which to run a class and local people can join in the weekly sessions. The course also covers the international recommendations for adaptation of exercise for older adults and for specific medical conditions associated with ageing.

The cost per applicant is £372 including VAT. Hampshire County Council is offering a reimbursement of £100 per person when the successful applicant has set up two on-going classes in their area. Those attending the course will need to provide a set of ankle weights. Booking early is essential, please contact Sophie Jevons on: 01962 846605 or email sophie.jevons@hants.gov.uk.

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Assisted living is in fine style

THIS distinctive building is part of builders McCarthy & Stone's new Later Living and Assisted Living development in Basingstoke.

The new show complex at Emma Court & Lady Susan Court is offering people over the age of 60 the chance to take their very first glimpse of what life at the development could be like.

Interested parties are now



invited to make an appointment to view the stylishly designed show apartments and take a tour of the development's many purpose-built shared facilities. Experienced sales consultants will be on hand to answer any questions that visitors and their families may have about purchasing, as well as provide additional information about the moving incentives and options.

Lorena Brown, national sales director for McCarthy & Stone, said: "We are really excited to finally be welcoming visitors to Emma Court & Lady Susan Court. The stunning show complex perfectly highlights the relaxing and comfortable lifestyle that could be achieved in retirement."

Slimming down's a family affair...

LITTLE did Lizi Nickless know when she walked into Oakridge Slimming World group five years ago that it was going to change her life forever.

Lizi had always hated being overweight but had never done anything about it, until she realised that she was likely to never see her grandchildren grow up.

Within ten months she had lost

By Chris Patching

c.patching@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

five stone and within 15 months had lost seven and a half stone. "Slimming World gave me back my life and when our consultant left the group, I decided that I would like to take the group over because of what Slimming World

had helped me achieve. It fitted in well with my full time job and I so wanted people to have the same opportunity as me," explained Lizi, 55.

On her first night as a consultant, her daughter joined the group but she did it as support to her mum not realising that within six months she too would lose three stone.

Hazel Eastman, aged 33, a busy wife and mother of two little boys, who lives in Popley, was so delighted with her new "Yummy Mummy" look that she too wanted to help other people achieve their weight loss dreams.

"My mum had done so well, not only losing the weight but also giving members the confidence to be able to do the same and I had no idea that losing weight could be so easy," she said.

"I was so excited and when

I saw what a fantastic opportunity the consultant role was and how I too could give back to the community too, I jumped at the chance. It fitted in so well with my family life" said Hazel.

Hazel and Lizi are two of nine consultants working in the Basingstoke area, under the management of Carole Pritchard.

"It is fantastic to have a mother and daughter in our team," said Ms Pritchard.

"They are so supportive and proactive and their total weight loss is over ten stone."

"Slimming World are passionate about wanting to help as many people as possible to achieve their weight loss dreams and we are looking to open more groups in Basingstoke and the surrounding area."

Lizi and Hazel both agree that Slimming World has given them a lot; a new look, a healthy new life and an amazing career.

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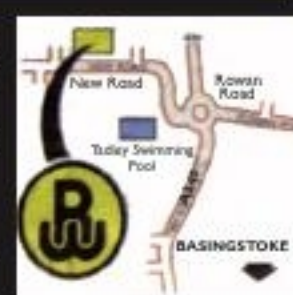
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• Lizi Nickless and her daughter, Hazel are providing a slimline tonic

Stationery retailer is offering more choice as it relocates

STAPLES, the stationery retailer, has announced it will be relocating to a new store in Basingstoke to offer customers even more choice under one roof.

The brand, which has 112 stores around the UK, will take over the old PC World unit at Brighton Hill Retail Park.

Customers will be able to find everything from stationery supplies, office machines and furniture to the latest technology, as well as a range of "Back to University" products.

The new store will also feature added benefits such as an EasyTech centre which offers full technical support and a copy and print centre, a custom printing service ideal for local businesses which require photocopying, business cards and leaflets.

The store manager, Barrie Howells, said: "We're really excited about the relocation,

range and services which will really benefit the local community."

"We're champing at the bit to get the doors open and welcome everyone to the store. The opening day itself will be a really fun occasion with entertainment, music, a whole host of activities for families and amazing deals."

The Staples store, at Brighton Hill Retail Park, will open at 9am on Saturday.

Do you have a story to share with our readers?

Contact Chris Patching on 01235 516930

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Charity variety night

BASINGSTOKE-BASED charity The Life Right Foundation are preparing to stage a variety night later this month, for an evening of entertainment to raise funds for the organisation.

The night will feature a gourmet hog roast, live music and dancing to the Pitchfork Band, and an on-stage mentalist with a Derren Brown-type performance demonstrating mental and intuitive abilities.

There will also be a slave auction, where guests can bid to have members of the Life Right team come to their home for four hours.

Event co-ordinator Samantha Taylor said: "Fundraising events for the foundation are always so well supported and local companies are always so generous with things to raffle.

"We'll be listing everything on the website nearer the time as well as another special announcement to come before the event."

The Life Right Foundation raise money for local children who have suffered any kind of abuse, neglect or trauma, and provides them and their families

By Adam Flinn

adam@taylornewspapers.co.uk

with life-changing treatment.

As part of each child's treatment plan, it is often extended to include family therapy with parents and grandparents.

The charity was set up earlier this year, with services provided by The Life Right Behavioural Medicine Practice, who match the money raised by the foundation.

Samantha added: "It is the charity's philosophy and belief that, as a community, we can work together to improve the area in which we live and help those within it who need our support. By coming to events like this, holding their own fundraising events or donating to the foundation, we can continue to help more and more children who have suffered exceptionally traumatic experiences in their lives."

It takes place at Victoria Hall in Hartley Wintney on September 27, from 7pm until midnight.

Call 01256 465089 or visit: www.theliferightfoundation.org.



• Margaret Angus, Life Right Foundation's community champion, and (right) the charity's lead practitioner and child psychotherapist Lesley Wickham

David Raphael Band returns

BASINGSTOKE Blues Club are welcoming back The David Raphael Band to The Moose Centre on Saturday, as part of the club's regular series of blues nights.

The band previously performed at the club in April last year, with Nick Hyde on vocals and guitar, drummer Bernie Fox and Steve Browning on fender bass.

Tickets cost £7 for an 8pm start, and are available on the door. For more information, go to www.basingstokebluesclub.co.uk.

Snappers host an open evening

THE North Hampshire Photographic Society is hosting its open evening tomorrow, as the first night of a varied and informative season of photography.

Beginners and experienced photographers are welcome to come along and meet other members, as well as finding out more about the society itself.

It starts at 8pm at Oakley Village Hall.

For more information about the society, visit www.nhps.weebly.com.

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New leader needed...

BASINGSTOKE Symphony Orchestra is on the lookout for a new leader, following Rebecca Totterdell's appointment to a full time position with the orchestra of the Welsh National Opera.

The Basingstoke orchestra perform three times a year at The Anvil, and is looking to recruit an experienced violinist to lead them for the foreseeable future.

Clive Evans, concert manager and oboe player with the orchestra, said: "She'll be greatly missed."

"Not only is she a superb, pro-

By Adam Flinn

adam@taylornewspapers.co.uk

essional player, she's very easy to work with, and I think she encourages the other players such a lot.

"For the next leader, we need somebody that is very accomplished and a strong player themselves at a professional standard, but at the same time somebody the whole orchestra can work with."

"We've got one or two applicants that have come forward that are of a very high calibre, so we will draw up a shortlist and trial probably the top three, and give them a concert to lead."

"Each of them will have a fair crack and then we'll decide, but it will probably be around next September before we have a permanent person in place."

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Basingstoke's Symphony Orchestra can trace its history back to the 1880s, with references made to concerts performed by local musicians.

But it was around 1930 that the Basingstoke Orchestral Society began, with a number of expert concert musicians playing with the group.

The orchestra's next concert is due to take place at The Anvil on November 7, which will be led by Sue Bint.

Clive himself has been involved with the orchestra since the mid-1960s, and added: "I think generally the audience are quite surprised at the standard the orchestra now achieves."

"Most people say we play like a professional orchestra - I can remember back when it was sort of hoots and wheezes, way back in the sixties!"

"We've got ex-professional players. Our double bass player for example has come from a professional orchestra in America, so we have a number of people like that plus some very good amateurs as well."

For more information about the orchestra and upcoming shows, go to www.bso.org.uk.



• Basingstoke Symphony Orchestra's Rebecca Totterdell

Around Britten

RENOWNED cellist Matthew Barley is staging an intimate concert at the Stone Gallery at The Vyne tomorrow, inspired by Benjamin Britten's centenary.

The 'Around Britten' tour features the dynamic and creative art of Matthew, with new music and a much-loved cello repertoire drawn together in a multi-media musical feast.

Tickets cost £18 and must be booked in advance. Call 01256 883858 or go to www.matthewbarley.com for more information.

Musicians' tour

MUSICIANS Petteri Sariola and Mike Dawes' UK tour starts at the Bordon Phoenix tomorrow evening, with the pair collaborating to produce a formidable show of solos and duets.

Helsinki-born Petteri combines guitar techniques with soulful singing, while Mike's reputation as an expert guitarist has spread worldwide following his 'What Just Happened?' tour.

The show starts at 8pm, and tickets cost £10. More details and booking information can be found at www.phoenix-arts.co.uk or by calling 01420 472664.

Les Misérables

BASINGSTOKE Discovery Centre's series of free film screenings continues next Thursday, with Les Misérables lined up as the latest blockbuster to be featured.

It follows the story of Jean Valjean, who for decades has been hunted by the ruthless policeman Javert after he breaks parole.

The screening starts at 2pm at the centre. Go to www.hants.gov.uk/bsdc or phone 01256 478670 for further details.

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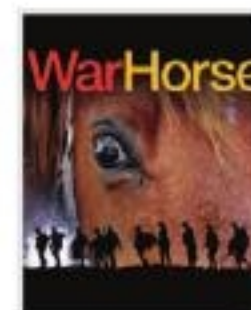
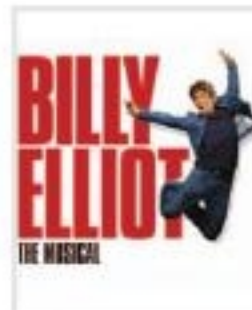


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21 September 7.30pm
The Haymarket
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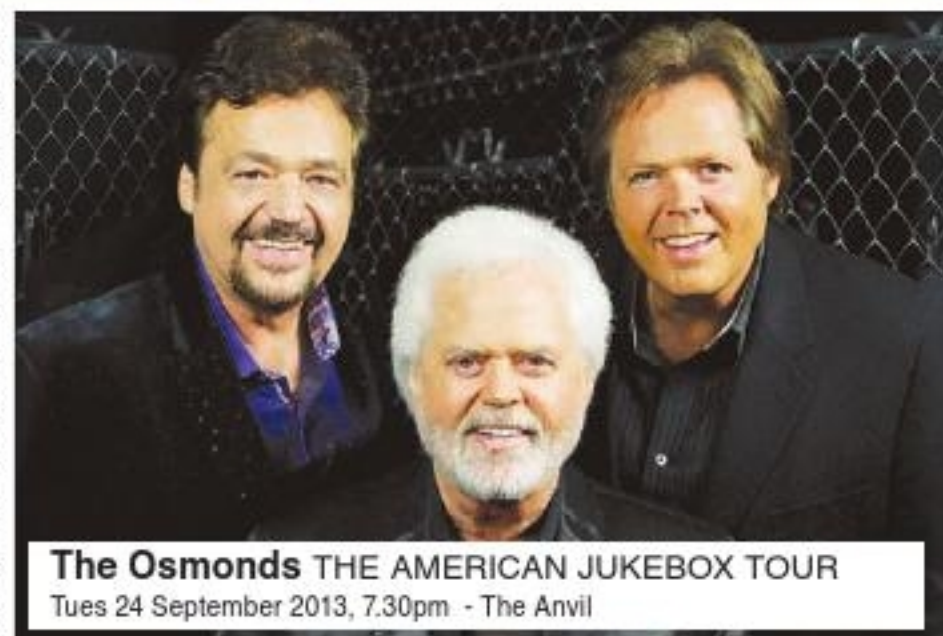
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26 September 8.15pm
The Forge

ANNIE KEATING

Tickets for Annie Keating are priced at £13. Over 65s, under 16s and full-time students pay £11. (Booking fee applies.) For more information or to book tickets, call the Anvil Arts box office on 01256 844244. Or use the Anvil Arts website www.anvilarts.org.uk

20 Oct
Bury Court

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LA FINTA SEMPLICE

Andrew Griffiths (conductor) Jeremy Gray (director) Booking information: On-line at bamptonopera.org/booking Telephone bookings: 01367 810769

27th September 7.30pm

Central Studio, Queen Mary's College Clid-desden Rd Jo Caulfield - Better The Devil You Know [COMEDY]

Tickets: £12.00 full | £10.00 concessions

Award-winning comedian and star of Radio 4 brings razor-sharp observations and scandalous stories in a celebration of anger. Box Office: 01256 418318

5th October 11am

Central Studio, Queen Mary's College Clid-desden Rd,
BON JOVIE TRIBUTE SHOW
£10.00 full | £8.00 concession
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Box Office: 01256 418318 www.centralstudio.co.uk / www.centralstudio.co.uk

11th Oct 7.30pm

Central Studio, Queen Mary's College Clid-desden Road
NICE

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Box Office: 01256 418318

11 - 19th October, 7.30pm

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Their panic increases when one of the actresses is poisoned and it becomes evident that a murderer is in their midst - a murderer who, it soon transpires, will not stop until they are all dead. Tickets cost £8 Adults & £6 Concessions, and can be booked by calling 01189 815600.

Further details from www.silchesterplayers.hampshire.org.uk

12th October 7pm

Central Studio, Queen Mary's College Clid-desden Road
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17th October

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17th October 7.30pm

Central Studio, Queen Mary's College Clid-desden Road,
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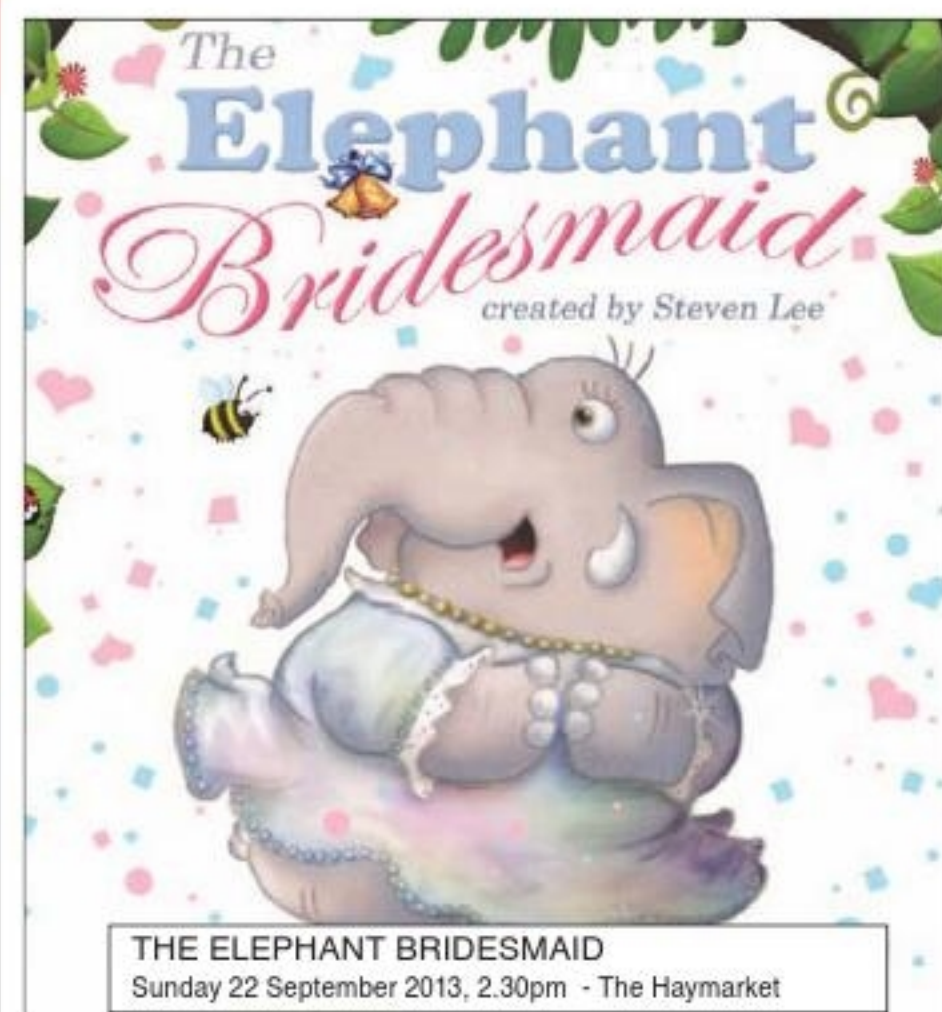


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WE all have our favourite superstar bands that we have followed for years. There's usually only one problem with having a real favourite – you may only get the chance to see them occasionally, especially if they are an overseas band who may only do a world tour once in a blue moon.

Bon Jovi are one of the hardest working bands out there and always seem to be on tour, but the chances of seeing them in the UK are sadly very thin on the ground.

Luckily it's not just you and me who are fans of their fantastic catalogue of hits, there is a group of 5 hot musicians who feel just the same about them and they are out there bringing classic

performances to us as often as possible.

Bon Jovie was formed in 2005 from a group of musicians who have been playing Bon Jovi material since the late 90s and they are coming to Central Studio on Saturday, September 28th.

More than just a gig.... Bon Jovi provide an entertaining and interactive show delivered with a truck load of humour. So come and share an evening of classic Bon Jovi hits with this highly experienced, international tribute band and then go home feeling like you just partied

Tickets are £10 (£8 concessions) and the gig starts at 8pm.

Win tickets!
We have 2 pairs of tickets for this great gig and all you have to do is answer this simple question:

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BON JOVI SONG TITLE
"LIVING ON A ..."**

IS IT HOUSEBOAT, PRAYER OR HARD SHOULDER?



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Competitions

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MEMORIES of the mighty Mill Reef will be evoked at The Racecourse Newbury on Saturday, 21 September with the forty-second running of the Dubai Duty Free-sponsored event named in tribute to the 1971 Epsom Derby hero.

Widely regarded as one of the greatest horses of all time, Mill Reef went on to etch his name on the Eclipse Stakes, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes and the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe, taking his place among racing's elite.

The highlight of an action-packed two-day fixture, which is targeted by leading owners and trainers, the Dubai Duty Free Mill Reef Stakes has a special place in Newbury's racing

Closing date:
Friday, September 13

calendar as it often throws up horses with serious Classic race potential.

Sharing the billing is the Group 3 Dubai International Airport World Trophy, the Group 3 Dubai Duty Free Legacy Cup and the Dubai Duty Free Handicap with a purse of £75,000, a notoriously competitive handicap, whose roll of honour includes Her Majesty The Queen's Leading Star.

It promises to be a really special day's racing and you, and a guest, could be there, soaking up the atmosphere and casting an eye

over the runners and riders, as a winner of our simple and easy-to-enter competition.

Courtesy of the multi-award winning airport retailer, we've got ten pairs of tickets to Newbury's exclusive Premier Enclosure give away absolutely FREE. For your chance to win, simply tell us:

Q: IN WHICH YEAR WAS THE DUBAI DUTY FREE MILL REEF STAKES FIRST RUN. WAS IT? 1971, 1972 OR 1973?



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- Return flight from London Heathrow airport to Boston†
- 4 nights stay at the Best Western Royal Plaza hotel, Marlborough with breakfast
- 2 nights stay at the Ogunquit River Plantation hotel, Maine with breakfast
- 3 nights stay at the Holiday Inn Rutland, Vermont with breakfast

OPTION 2:

23 September - 3 October and 10-20 October 2013

- Visiting Cape Cod, the Island of Martha's Vineyard, the Pilgrim town of Plymouth (and the Plimoth Plantation), Boston, the battlefields of Lexington, Salem, Newport (Rhode Island), New Hampshire, Vermont and Stowe.
- Return flight from London Heathrow airport to Boston†
- 3 nights stay at the Resort and Conference Center, Hyannis with breakfast
- 4 nights stay at the Best Western Royal Plaza hotel, Marlborough with breakfast
- 2 nights stay at the Holiday Inn Rutland, Vermont with breakfast

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Lymington on Market Day and New Forest Drive

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November 2013

Sunday 3rd November

The Forest of Dean and Wye Valley

- Route 'A' • Adult & OAP £20.00
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Saturday 16th November

Christmas Shopping at Westfield

- Route 'C' • Adult & OAP £15.00
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Christmas In London

- Route 'B' • Adult & OAP £15.00
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December 2013

Sunday 1st December

Bath Christmas Market

- Route 'C' • Adult & OAP £15.00
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Saturday 7th December

Brugge Christmas Market

- Route 'X' • Adult £42.50
- (No child reduction)

Saturday 14th December

London Christmas Shopping and Lights Tour

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Focus is on Ford EcoBoost

FORD has announced a new ultra-efficient version of the Focus 1.0-litre EcoBoost that will be the first petrol-powered family car in Europe to offer 99 g/km CO2 emissions.

The Ford Focus 1.0-litre EcoBoost ECOnetic has returned 67.5mpg in tests thanks to its specially calibrated 100PS version of the firm's high-tech small capacity engine. To help it achieve these class-leading efficiency levels, the new model also incorporates other eco-technology, including ultra-low rolling resistance tyres, different aerodynamics under the car and revised gearing.

"Just a couple of years ago few would have thought that a medium-sized petrol car could break the 100g/km CO2 barrier," said Barb Samardzich, European Product Development vice president. "Ford's 1.0-litre EcoBoost engine has a habit of taking expectations of what a petrol engine can deliver and turning them upside down."

REVIEW: FORD FOCUS ECOBOOST

By Philip Shoulder

@writeonmotoring

The new model will extend the range of EcoBoost equipped Focus models to three; alongside the standard 100PS version, with 109g/km CO2 emissions, and the 125PS with 114g/km CO2.

Introduced to the Fiesta, B-MAX, C-MAX and seven-seat Grand C-MAX last year, the 1.0-litre EcoBoost engine will be extended to the EcoSport SUV, Transit Connect and Transit Courier commercial vehicles; Tourneo Connect people mover; and later the all-new Mondeo.

Ford's EcoBoost engines are able to deliver power, combined with efficiency, due to a low inertia turbocharger, split cooling system and direct fuel injection. ECOnetic variants also utilise other eco-technologies,

including Auto-Start-Stop, Smart Regenerative Charging, Active Grille Shutter and Ford EcoMode to support a more economical and environmentally friendly driving style.

A zero emission Focus Electric will follow this autumn, along with the diesel Focus ECOnetic that promises emissions as low as 88g CO2.

"With the

Focus 1.0-litre EcoBoost, Focus family cars," said Sherif Marakby, medium car vehicle line director, Ford of Europe. Ford offers customers an unrivalled power of choice of fuel-efficient

• Ford Focus EcoBoost



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Relegation for Wintney despite final day victory

HARTLEY Wintney's heroic end-of-season run could not prevent them from being relegated from Southern League One.

Despite winning by 14 runs against Fawley on Saturday, other results meant Scott Baldwin's men will ply their trade in League Two next season.

Opener Lee Weiss made an impressive 82 as Hartley made 231-8 from their 50 overs.

But only Tom Gates (109) offered any real resistance for the hosts, who could only manage 217 all out.

Chris Jolley (3-23), Baldwin (3-26) and Roy Cockram (2-52) did the damage with the ball, but it was ultimately not enough to save them from relegation.

Meanwhile, Hook and Newnham Basics ended the season in disappointing fashion after suffering a 132-run defeat at Andover.

Tim Lewis (94) and Greg Dawson (92) shared an opening stand of 203 as Andover posted 284-7.

Richard Wilcock (2-38) and Ben Thane (2-49) were the pick of the Hook bowlers.

In reply, opener Thane made a patient 43, but the Hook reply failed to materialise, with Matthew Buckingham (29) the only other batsman to pass 20 as they were restricted to 152-9.

Hartley edge past Badshot

HARTLEY Wintney progressed to the next stage of FA Cup qualifying with a 3-2 win over Badshot Lea in preliminary qualifying on Saturday.

A Sam Argent hat-trick ensured Hartley will face Camberley Town in the first qualifying round on September 14.

Before that, Hartley face a trip to Flackwell Heath as they two locks horns in the first qualifying round of the FA Vase.

Jubilant Bountymen lift League Two title

BASINGSTOKE and North Hants CC captain Dan Coombs has described his side's season as "an amazing effort", following their title-clinching victory over Paultons on Saturday.

The 123-run win secured the Southern League Two title for the Bountymen, after nearest rivals Hursley Park lost at Old Tauntonians.

Stoke ended the season on 309 points, 12 clear of Hursley, with 14 wins from 18 games.

"It's been a really good season - we set out at the start of the season to win the league, and to actually win it shows an amazing effort from all the lads.

"Last week was disappointing to lose, but everyone was keen

By James Booker

news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

to make sure we were champions.

"We've played Hursley twice - we beat them once and we would have beaten them again if the weather hadn't intervened, so I think we deserved to win the league."

Coombs picked out his side's astonishing winning run of 12 matches on the spin as the highlight of the summer.

"I think we won 12 on the trot, and it would have been 14 if it wasn't for the weather. To get that kind of run going, winning

every week and winning quite convincingly was brilliant."

Coombs also believes the convincing nature of a lot of the side's victories, coupled with impressive showings against higher-level sides in the national cup, will send a message to the teams in Southern League One ahead of next season.

"At the start of the season, in the National Cup, we beat Lymington, who are in the Premier League, and lost by just one wicket to Totton and Eling, another of the teams in that division, so that shows our side can be very competitive against higher opposition.

"Hopefully next season the guys can show that we are

good enough to compete in that league. And you never know, we might be pushing for promotion again."

Basingstoke amassed 251-9 from their 50 overs, largely thanks to a terrific lower order effort from Mathew Thankachan (51), Ryan Conner (41 not out) and David Pistorius (21 not out), which rescued the Bountymen from 117-6. Paulton battled in response, but lost Stewart Magee early on after James (3-22) trapped him LBW.

Connor bagged a hat-trick on his way to 3-24, while Pistorius (3-23) and Graham Porter (1-44) were also among the wickets as Paulton were bowled out for 128.



• Basingstoke and North Hants after being crowned Southern League Two champions (Picture by Martin Coombs)

Sport Bites

Bison demand

BASINGSTOKE Arena has extended its opening hours this week to help cope with the rush of demand for Basingstoke Bison tickets.

Fans this week have flocked to the arena after tickets for their first three games of the new season went on sale on Sunday.

This weekend sees the Bison face a double-header of pre-season friendlies against the Guildford Flames, in Basingstoke on Saturday and Surrey on Sunday.

The first competitive game of the new season sees the Bison take on Swindon Wildcats next weekend.

Rising star

BASINGSTOKE ice-skating star Danielle Harrison has been awarded funding to help her development over the next three years.

Danielle is British number one in the National Ice-Skating Association (NISA) junior ladies ranking.

She will receive £1,000 a year until July 2016, after being selected for NISA's Young Rising Star development award.

'Stoke ready

BASINGSTOKE RFC kick-off their league season on Saturday against East Grinstead.

James Croker's men start life in Nation London Three South and East against the side who won the London One South title last year.

Stoke clinched promotion in April after a 27-3 play-off victory over Eton Manor.

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Inside: Jubilant Bountymen lift League Two title | 'Stoke ready' | Relegation for Wintney's battling cricketers

WE SHOULD HAVE WON BY MORE

Bristow pleased with win, but wants team to convert chances

JASON Bristow believes his Basingstoke side should have won by more goals against Staines Town, despite the Dragons securing a 2-1 win at the Camrose on Saturday.

Goals from the strike pairing of Kezie Ibe and Manny Williams kept the Dragons' 100 per cent home record intact this season, and lifted them to second in the Skrill South table with four wins from five games.

Despite being pleased with the way his injury-hit side fought back after going a goal down, the Dragons boss felt his side should have made it an easier task than they did.

"It's nice winning games by the odd goal, because it means you're seeing games out well," he said. "But certainly on Saturday we should have won by more than a one-goal margin, and that was the only criticism

By James Booker

news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

of the players.

"We should have seen the game off when we had the chances.

"We had a lot of players out injured on Saturday, and we conceded a really soft goal from our point of view, but the response was very good.

"We weren't behind for long, and once we got the equaliser, the confidence grew again, and the belief was there for us to go on and win the game."

Basingstoke were missing six first-team players in Louis Dodds, David Ray, Robbie Rice, Nathan Campbell, Robbie Matthews and Jordace Holder-Spooner, and Bristow handed starts to Joe McDonnell, Nathan Smart and Shaun McAuley.

However, Bristow is confident that Dodds, Ray (illness), Rice (concussion), Matthews and Dodds (both ankle) will all make the trip to Whitehawk on Saturday.

Campbell has a hamstring problem, and is described as "touch and go", while Holder-Spooner remains a long-term absentee with a dislocated shoulder.

Newly-promoted Whitehawk, having won the Isthmian League Premier last season, have started the season slowly with just one win from five games, and are hovering above the relegation zone.

However, this win was a 6-2 away drubbing of Dorchester, and Bristow is fully aware of the threat they pose.

"Whitehawk have not had the greatest of starts in terms of points return, but they beat Dorchester 6-2, so they've got goals in them, they score plenty and have been a bit unlucky so far.

"The scorelines don't really reflect their performances, they're going to be a very tough side to beat.



• Manny Williams, seen here in action against Weston-super-Mare, netted the winner for the Dragons last weekend against Staines (Picture by Les Chase)

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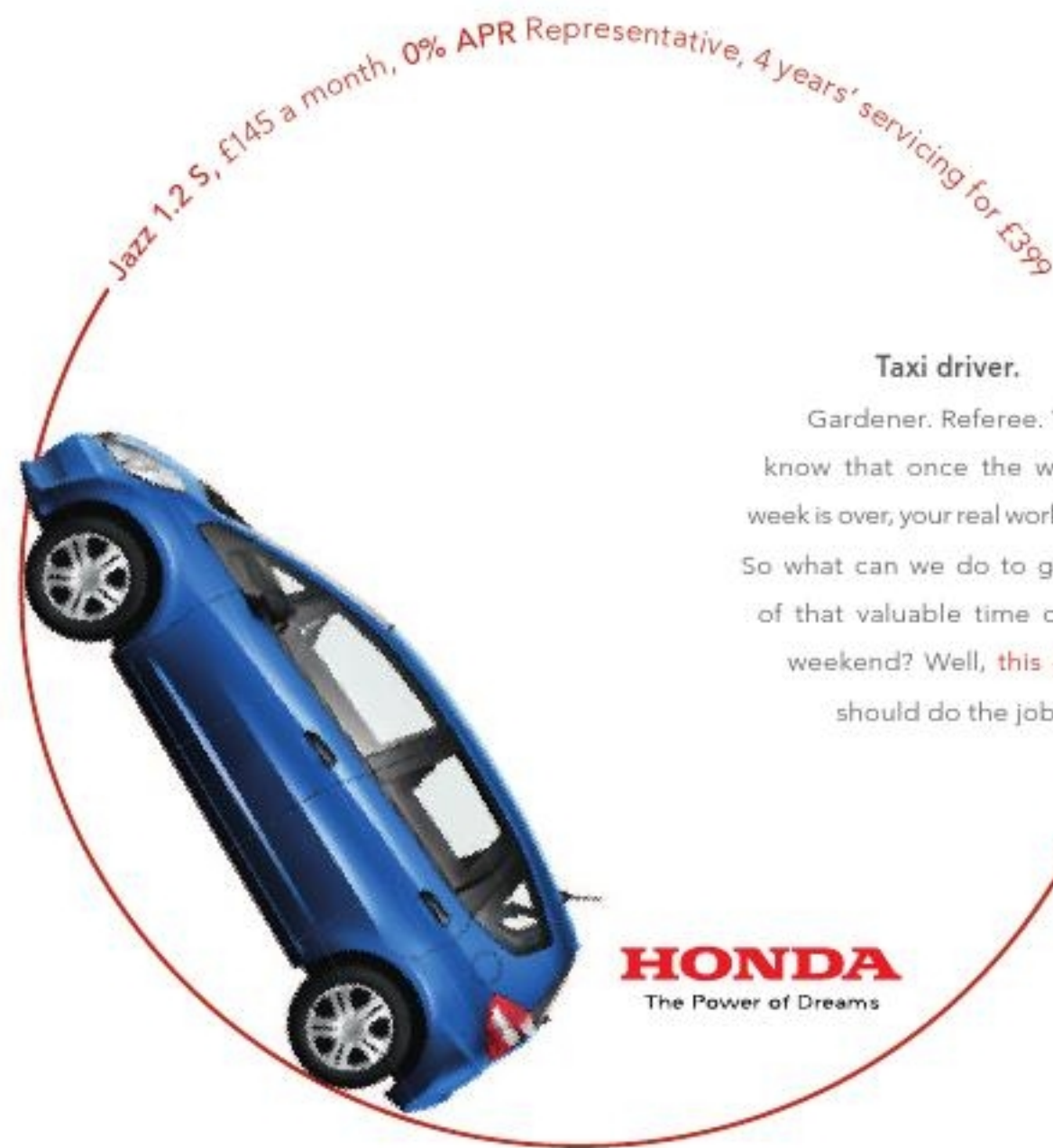
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